

Symposium on Pre-Service Education at the Elementary Level

Report

Karnataka Education Network

RV Educational Consortium, Bangalore

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Professional preparation of teachers has been recognized as crucial since 1960. However, the ground reality remains a matter of great concern. The Kothari commission (1964-66) stressed the need for teacher education to be brought into mainstream academic activity, but teacher education colleges continue to remain isolated.

Pre-service education at the elementary level is further cut-off from institutions of higher learning. This sector goes by the nomenclature of Diploma in Education (D.Ed) in Karnataka. The programme is of two-year duration, which includes an internship of three months. The entry level qualification is the pre-university course (Higher Secondary).

Some of the issues that confront pre-service education at the elementary level in Karnataka are:

- The past five years have seen an almost ten-fold increase in the number of D.Ed colleges in Karnataka in the private, unaided sector
- Most of the initiatives in the elementary education sector have focused on in-service teachers' training. This has resulted in accentuating the gap between pre-service and in-service teacher education
- There have been few efforts to understand the needs and aspirations of student teachers and tailor the course to suit their needs
- Curricular changes effected by the National Council for Teacher Education, New Delhi have not resulted in meaningful pedagogical changes in the D.Ed colleges

The symposium was organised to grapple with some of these issues.

Agenda and Events

Objectives of the symposium

1. To provide a forum for the sharing of experiences of organizations working in the area of pre-service education at elementary level
2. To engage in discussions a diverse range of thought leaders from the field of education

The following sessions were held:

1. Plenary -1 that provided an overview of the pre-service education sector
2. Poster presentations by five organizations/institutions to share experiences and learning from working in the sector, including research studies
3. Focussed group discussions on the following themes:
 - Current status of capacity building programmes for D.Ed college lecturers
 - Relevance of the current D.Ed curriculum and textbooks
 - Efficacy of classroom transactions
 - Implications of mushrooming of new D.Ed colleges
 - Developing synergy between D.Ed colleges and neighbouring schools

These were parallel sessions, with separate groups deliberating on each theme. The groups were facilitated by eminent people with experience in elementary education

4. Panel discussion on *Increasing Effectiveness of D.Ed Programme*. The discussants in the panel were the facilitators of the FGDs
5. Plenary -2 that consolidated the day's proceedings and charted out probable future courses of action

Proceedings

Plenary -1

Prof. Padma Sarangapani, TISS , Mumbai addressed the Plenary. She began by pointing out the lack of visibility of pre service teacher education in educational discourses.

Prof Sarangapani raised the following issues, thereby setting the tone for the day's proceedings:

- The dichotomy between profession and vocation, with elementary teacher training largely remaining vocational. This has resulted in an excessive focus on skill development without adequate understanding of underlying theory
- The present trend of a quantitative expansion of D.Ed colleges, without adequate attention to the course content
- Pre service education needs to focus on grooming future teachers to become innovators
- Providing meaningful education in the context of UEE is the primary challenge at present
- The D.Ed curriculum does not adequately address the requirements of primary schools
- Sociology of teacher education to be given adequate attention. A profile of students who come to the teaching profession to be documented

She concluded the Plenary with the hope that the symposium would prove stimulating to teacher educators.

Poster Presentation

Five organisations presented their work in the area of pre service teacher education through posters.

1. Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore

APF had conducted a study involving 120 D.Ed colleges across 8 districts of Karnataka. The aim of the first phase of the study was to understand the present condition of D.Ed colleges in Karnataka, in terms of the available facilities and basic functionalities. A summary of the findings of this phase was presented.

2. Bharath Gyan Vigyan Samithi, Bangalore

BGVS is implementing the *Vidyankura* Project in Chamarajanagar district. Their experiences of working with 2 D.Ed colleges in the district were shared.

3. District Institute of Education and Training, Chamarajanagar

DIET, Chamarajanagar has set up a resource centre. The resource centre is being extensively used by both pre-service and in-service teachers. The DIET team showcased their centre and its usage.

4. Karnataka Education Network, Bangalore

KEN has been working towards capacity building of students and teacher educators of D.Ed colleges, for the past two years. A small study was conducted to gain a understanding of the current status of D.Ed colleges. The findings of this study and an overview of our capacity building programme were presented.

5. Swamy Vivekananda Youth Movement, Hosahalli

SVYM runs a D.Ed college at Hosahalli. They are attempting to innovate through curricular changes to suit the local tribal community. Their learning and outcomes were encapsulated in the posters.

Delegates were given an hour to go through the posters and interact with the concerned personnel. A common Q& A session on the posters was arranged. A few of them had suggestions for improving programmes' impact.

Focussed Group Discussions

Delegates were asked to choose a theme that they would like to participate in. A brief note had been prepared for each theme and a few suggestive questions listed to facilitate the FGDs.

Theme: Current status of Capacity Building programmes for D.Ed college lecturers

Facilitator: Prof. TKS Lakshmi

Questions addressed:

- ⇒ The training programmes attended by the discussants so far in their teaching career: including their nature and frequency; agencies that conducted their programmes; and their usefulness
- ⇒ What were the immediate needs of lecturers in terms of their capacity building? How do we align these programmes to meet their needs? What should be the delivery mechanisms of such programmes?
- ⇒ What academic resources are needed for the training of teacher educators? Are they available or should we create them?
- ⇒ What additional inputs need to be given to lecturers to help them train their students to become effective primary school teachers?
- ⇒ What are the academic challenges and problems faced by lecturers?
- ⇒ How should lecturers' professional development be charted out?

Participants read the discussion brief and Prof Lakshmi urged the participants to be clear about the current status of D.Ed lecturer in the system and brainstorm ideas on what needs to be done for the capacity building programmes for D.Ed. lecturers.

Prof. Lakshmi pointed out that the usage of the term 'capacity building' hints at the underlying assumption that 'something needs to be built, which is missing'; she opined that we can only enhance capacity which is already there in individuals by providing opportunities and enabling people to update their knowledge and skills. However, these aspects cannot be built as capacities. She invited the members to express their ideas and requested everybody to participate in the discussion.

Summary of key issues and ideas for way forward

Key issues	Ideas for way forward
Training for Teacher Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralised and context specific training programmes in line with the expectations in NCF- 2005 • Focus on short term courses, personality skills development programme for teacher educators with an emphasis on critical, reflective and creative thinking • Providing fellowships to teacher educators for enhancing the professional development and skills related to action research • Creation of resource center can provide opportunities for formal/informal learning among teacher educators and student teachers
Institutional Development of D.Ed. colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve management in open discussions about institutional change process • Develop institutional process for sharing of ideas /experiences among colleagues and management. Informal and formal sharing of ideas is essential for professional development. • Develop ability of peer/ mentoring support among students and colleagues for better learning opportunities • Networking among D.Ed colleges for sharing academic resources and continuous on going field based support
Monitoring of D.Ed. colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIET as an institute needs to play a leadership role in devising systems and processes for monitoring colleges. The NCTE designed indicators may be discussed among D.Ed colleges and certain consensus can be arrived on the quality indicators and tools for self monitoring • DIET needs to come out of the inspectorial nature of monitoring the colleges but stress on academic issues during the process of monitoring of these colleges

Some of the other issues brought to fore by Prof. Lakshmi, while summarising the group's views are:

- A hierarchical order is followed while planning for training
- Capacity building programmes for teacher educators focus on enhancing skills and not on conceptual positioning
- DIETs are overloaded having to oversee 30-40 D.Ed colleges each
- There are many systemic lapses such as teacher educators having no or little experience in handling classes at primary school level; transfer of DIET and Government college faculty; and lack of adequate opportunities for professional growth especially in the private sector

Theme: Relevance of the current D.Ed Curriculum and Textbook

Facilitator: Mr. Jagannatha Rao

Questions addressed:

- ⇒ How should the curriculum be revamped keeping in mind the ground realities? How can we ensure greater participation of lecturers in curriculum development and textbook preparation?
- ⇒ What is the nature of orientation that lecturers would require to implement the curriculum in a meaningful way?
- ⇒ What are the practical ways to avoid total dependence of students and lecturers on textbooks?
- ⇒ What guidelines should be provided for the creation of textbooks/related resources?

There were a lot of animated discussions in this group. Two teacher educators who were part of the team that revised the D.Ed curriculum and have written textbooks were part of this group.

The highlights of these discussions are tabulated below:

Key issues	Ideas for way forward
Curriculum revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frame a curriculum. Do a pilot study and then implement it• While framing curriculum, link theory and practice as much as possible• Curriculum revision should be periodical, say five years with provisions for yearly variations. It was also suggested that the annual changes could be sent through e-mails or some kind of intra-net connectivity to all D.Ed colleges from DSERT to avoid delays• Curriculum revision committee should involve more lecturers Curriculum revision to be done after getting adequate feedback on the current curriculum from lecturers• To ensure greater involvement of lecturers, resource groups at district/taluk levels to be formed. Curriculum committee to visit all the districts, collect information and then accordingly revise/revamp the curriculum• A University of Teacher Education is needed in order to bring out competent educators• Curricular revision to take into account the variety of colleges that are functioning• Create an optional subject in the curriculum that would focus on studying disadvantaged groups
Lecturers' orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training for lecturers is an absolute necessity to help them understand the curriculum that they have to implement• Better awareness of resources needs to be created among lecturers• Since most teacher Educators do not have experience in teaching in primary schools, primary school teachers/BRPs or CRPs should be made to interact with teacher educators and share their experiences and learning

Excessive dependence on textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish resource centres in colleges or establish linkages between colleges and resource centres • Make more resources/reference materials available in Kannada • Orient lecturers on the objectives of each subject • Make D.Ed books more localized
Guidelines for preparing textbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination among the textbook committee members to be improved • Thorough review by experts • Text book writers to impart training on transactions bringing out their thought processes • Training lecturers on what needs to be highlighted in each subject

Issues raised by Mr. Rao during his summary are:

- A holistic view is to be taken while reviewing the curriculum
- Space has to be provided in the curriculum for learning innovative field experiences
- Curriculum review to be taken up periodically
- During reviews, gaps to be identified critically
- D.Ed curriculum is a replica of B.Ed curriculum

Theme: Efficacy of Classroom transactions

Facilitator: Prof. C S Nagaraju

Questions addressed:

- ⇒ How to make the classroom interaction more imaginative?
- ⇒ What needs to be done to equip the teacher educators to make classroom transactions more efficient and effective?
- ⇒ What reforms in the examination system are needed to revitalize our classrooms?
- ⇒ What types of academic resources are needed? How to create / procure them?

Prof. Nagaraju initiated the discussion by sharing his experiences and viewpoints.

Summary of key issues and ideas for way forward

Key issues	Ideas for way forward
Effective classroom transaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D.Ed. classrooms should be more like primary schools and not colleges • Focus of D.Ed classrooms should be on the process rather than the end result • Increase student-to-student interaction inside and outside class including but not restricted to practice teaching • Document the schooling experiences of the D.Ed. students as they enter the course and use it to understand their changing attitudes • Students must be constantly provided with opportunities to unlearn • Sensitise the lecturers regarding the aims of the D.Ed. course and means to achieve them • Provide training to the lecturers teaching the D.Ed. course • Lecturers should get opportunities to teach in a primary school
Examination reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on examination reforms to be taken up forthwith • Number of 'open ended' questions should be increased
Creating/Procuring resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher educators need to be oriented towards creation and use of resources; this needs training programmes • Use available ICT tools – for instance, videos of model lessons by exceptional teachers can be shown to the D.Ed. students

Further issues raised by Prof. Nagaraju while summarising:

- The curriculum needs to be reviewed immediately
- Knowledge and skills taught in classrooms are treated as an end in themselves
- D.Ed course is being treated as a requirement for certification and not as a space for preparing future teachers
- Students should be actively encouraged to reflect on experiences within classrooms
- Teacher educators to adopt a critical pedagogy

Theme: Implications of mushrooming of new D.Ed colleges

Facilitator: Prof. S N Prasad

Questions addressed:

- ⇒ How has mushrooming of new colleges impinged on quality of D.Ed programme?
- ⇒ What impact have these colleges had on their students and lecturers working there, in terms of their professional development; social and financial standing; and psychological effects?
- ⇒ What long term effects would this policy decision have on education in general and thereby the larger society?
- ⇒ If we look at the presence of so many D.Ed colleges as a problem, then how do we hope to overcome it?

Prof. Prasad began with a slide show on the role and responsibilities of NCTE, which was set up by the Central Government in 1973 as an advisory body to Government at the Centre and the State. The presentation gave a comprehensive picture of facts, figures norms and conditions laid by NCTE regarding opening and managing of D.Ed institutions. As a long standing member of NCTE, Prof. Prasad shared his views and experience that he gained while working for the Council.

Summary of key issues and ideas for way forward:

Key issues	Ideas for way forward
Impact of new colleges on quality of D.Ed programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An irrational increase in the number of D.Ed colleges will affect the quality of D.Ed programme in the long run• A stringent monitoring system has to be put in place. The existing monitoring system is not really effective
Impact on students and lecturers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two participants who had recently passed out of D.Ed opined that studying in relatively obscure private college creates inferiority complex in the minds of students as well as lecturers working in these colleges
Possible solutions to the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This year, there was a noticeable decline in the students' admission. This ended up in closing of a few D.Ed colleges. This may have a natural control over the problem• Regulatory body like the NCTE should be vested with real powers. Some participants suggested that, state education department must also take the responsibility of managing and monitoring• Since DIETs are overburdened, a separate monitoring system needs to be put in place• Rather than worrying too much about the increase in the number of D.Ed colleges, we need to think about focusing on enhancing the quality of the existing D.Ed programme

Further issues raised by Prof. Prasad are:

- Information about NCTE's regulations is disorganized
- The exponential growth of D.Ed colleges is not commensurate with the growth of students
- Quality of teachers coming to primary schools has decreased despite enhancing the entry level qualification from SSLC to PUC
- Market forces would eventually plateau the growth of D.Ed colleges
- NCTE is focusing excessively on regulatory function rather than on academic monitoring

Theme: Developing synergy between D.Ed colleges and neighbouring Schools

Facilitator: Dr. Senthil Kumar

Questions addressed:

- ⇒ What resource inputs can D.Ed colleges provide primary schools?
- ⇒ What learning can schools provide to D.Ed students and lecturers?
- ⇒ How can school teachers and teacher educators collaborate in improving the mentoring programme?
- ⇒ How can a synergetic relationship be promoted between D.Ed colleges and schools?
- ⇒ Specific instances of good practices where D.Ed colleges and schools are actively engaged to each other's mutual benefit

Summary of key issues and ideas for way forward

Key issues	Ideas for way forward
Inputs from colleges to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges can help schools chart quality improvement plan • Offer theory driven/research based solutions to common problems faced by teachers. Student teachers/ teacher educators can take up/guide school teachers to take up action research of recurring problems they face in classrooms
Inputs from schools to colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help student teachers relate theory to classroom practices/lesson plan writing during practice teaching • Bridge the dichotomy between what is taught in D.Ed colleges and the specific needs of schools, as for example handling multi grade classrooms; helping provide resource rich learning environments to meet diverse students' needs and so on • Help broaden student teachers' perception about teaching/learning by observing and documenting how children learn; under what circumstances they learn etc.
Synergetic relation between schools & colleges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School teachers and teacher educators should communicate with each other about expectations from both sides, before internship commences • Colleges and Department to provide greater support to school teachers to act as mentors for student teachers. DIETs can motivate teachers to take up mentoring seriously through public recognition etc. • Colleges can help set up resource centres in schools. The schools can in turn manage these centres & build them up during subsequent internships • Student teachers can help school teachers provide additional information about individual students; collect & collate data; and undertake meaningful case studies that would be of direct use to teachers to plan their lessons • Student teachers can don the role of mentors for students
Specific instances of effective college school synergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These have to be studied, documented and widely disseminated

Panel Discussion

The august members of the panel had many pertinent observations to make about the prevalent situation in the pre-service sector, along with practical suggestions to overcome systemic problems.

The highlights of the discussion are enumerated below:

The D.Ed programme

- Conceptualisation of practice, reflection and internalisation requires a longer time than the present two years offers
- Integrated programmes along the lines of B.El.Ed have to be initiated
- The programme to take better cognizance of good theory

Curriculum

- The D.Ed curriculum has to be revamped, along the lines of NCF, 2005
- A rich, vibrant curriculum has to be visualised
- A lot of innovations have happened since DPEP at the elementary level, which haven't been reflected in the D.Ed curriculum
- Teacher educators to be given autonomy to evolve and implement their own curriculum
- The curriculum should help students develop an anthropological view towards childhood, as Indian society has many different kinds of childhood

Teacher Educators

- There is no strong academic association for teacher educators. Hence academic spaces have to be created for them. Teacher educators can use these forums to professionalise their cadre and build institutional ethos
- A minimum of three years of teaching experience in primary schools has to be stipulated for teacher educators
- Periodic training for teacher educators has to be made mandatory
- Capacity enhancement programmes for teacher educators to take cognizance of their needs

- Teacher educators to be offered fellowships
- To help improve D.Ed classroom transactions, teacher educators need to be given a course on adult psychology
- Teacher educators need to be helped in internalizing the concepts covered in D.Ed curriculum
- D.Ed curriculum is designed to give an overview of the sector. Teacher educators need to be oriented towards the curriculum and help them cull out common themes cutting across the curriculum

Plenary -2

Prof. Sarangapani summarised the day's proceedings succinctly and pointed out the future courses of action. She said the D.Ed course should help students become independent thinking teachers. Student teachers must be taught to respect children. The professor suggested that there was no need for a centralised curriculum or monitoring mechanisms. Teacher educators have to think and behave as professionals. She felt that the hierarchical structure of teacher training has to be broken. She concluded by saying that it is imperative for classroom transactions to be informed by sound theoretical knowledge rather than mere intuitive knowledge.

Prof. C S Nagaraju added that mere tinkering with the system is not going to be sufficient. The sector needs a thorough overhauling. Alongside structural and curricular changes, a strong teacher educator community needs to be developed.

There was a general consensus among the delegates that the D.Ed sector suffers from isolation and poor visibility. Everybody felt that more such events should be held periodically. Some of the delegates suggested wider dissemination of innovative and successful programmes like Delhi University's B.El.Ed and NCERT managed RIE's B.Sc Ed.

The symposium was able to suggest definite action points that came up repeatedly during the course of the day. These are:

- ✓ Offering integrated 4 year programme
- ✓ Revamping the curriculum to cater to the needs of schools as well as to the student teachers' background
- ✓ Providing adequate opportunities for student teachers to reflect and internalize the course content
- ✓ Making capacity enhancement programmes mandatory for teacher educators
- ✓ Ensuring that these programmes meet the needs of teacher educators
- ✓ Initiating forums for teacher educators
- ✓ Offering fellowships for teacher educators
- ✓ Cultivating stronger relationships among the different government structures for implementing and monitoring elementary schools; in service teacher education and the pre service sector
- ✓ Establishing resource centres in colleges
- ✓ Creating profiles of students entering D.Ed colleges
- ✓ Strengthening mentoring of student teachers by school teachers
- ✓ Establishing strong and mutually beneficial linkages between D.Ed colleges and neighbouring schools

List of Delegates who attended the Symposium

Sl.No	Name	Organisation/College name
1.	Aleemunnisa I	DIET, Tumkur
2.	Aparna Kher	APF, Bangalore
3.	Basavaraju E	BGVS, Bangalore
4.	Bhaskar .V	Sri Satya Sai DE.d College Srinivasapura, Kolar, Dist
5.	BRS Banerjee	APF, Bangalore
6.	Doddomegowta	B.E.S T.T.I, Bangalore
7.	Geetha Arvind	Anubhava Science Foundation, Bangalore
8.	Girisha K.H	BGVS, Bangalore
9.	Indira Vijaysimha	APF, Bangalore
10.	Jagadeesh	DIET, Chamarajanagar
11.	Jayadeva	Deenabandhu, Chamarajanagar
12.	Kaleswara Rao	Retd. DIET. Faculty, Bangalore
13.	Kantharaju	KSU, Yadgir, Bangalore
14.	Latha .K	Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai
15.	Lingaraju	S.L.N.T.T.I, Bangalore
16.	Mahendra .L	BGVS, Chamarajanagar
17.	Mahesh	The Teacher Foundation, Bangalore
18.	Mahesh P	Vivekananda DE.d College, Hosahalli
19.	Manjunath H.D	Seshadripuram T.T.I, Bangalore
20.	Mary Kumari J.A	St. Teresa's Women's T.T.I, Bangalore
21.	Munikriahnappa .K	Shreyas T.T.I, Srinivasapura, Kolar Dist
22.	Nagaraju H.B	My Institution DE.d College
23.	Neha Lal	APF, Bangalore
24.	Padma G.T	DIET, Chamarajanagar
25.	Parul	RRC for Elementary Education, Delhi
26.	Parvathi .s	M.S Ramaiah T.T.I, Bangalore
27.	Poonam Sharma	RRC of Elementary Education, Delhi
28.	Prabha S.K	Retd. DIET Lecturer, Bangalore
29.	Prakash Kamath	Independent Researcher, Bangalore

Sl.No	Name	Organisation/College name
30.	Praveen Rao	SRTT-yadgir KSU, Bangalore
31.	Prema Jose	St.Teresa T.T.I, Bangalore
32.	Radhamani	Retd. DIET Lecturer, Bangalore
33.	Ram Kumar N	Wipro, Bangalore
34.	Ramaradhya M.R	P.E.T, DE.d College, Mandya.
35.	Ravi .A	Akshara, Bangalore
36.	Sadananda R	Deenabandhu School, Chamarajanagar
37.	Shanmuganathan	Sangati, Bangalore
38.	Shikha Sharma	APF, Bangalore
39.	Shivanna P.V	Rashtreeya Vidhyalaya T.T.I, Bangalore
40.	Sowbhagya Lakshmi Bai K	St. Teresa's Women's T.T.I, Bangalore
41.	Sreenivasa H	My Institution DE.d College, Bangalore
42.	Sumathi K.V	-
43.	Uma Harikumar	APF, Bangalore
44.	Vasudevachor .G	Viveka T.T.I, Hosahalli
45.	Vijay Kumar G.T	Vidya Vikasa Institute of Education, Chamarajanagar
46.	Vijaya Kumar	The Teacher Foundation, Bangalore